

MSN Home | My MSN | Hotmail | Search | Shopping | Money | People & Chat |



ONLY
\$19.95

FAST Tax Refunds!

File your taxes online... Fast, Simple, Secure

msn
GO NOW!

Learning and Research

Encarta Home | Reference | Homework | College | Grad | eLearning | Parents | Shop | Help

Search Encyclopedia



Reference

Encarta



DICTIONARY

Find about

Word List

Previous Next

[abortive](#)

[ABQ system](#)

[Aboukir, Bay of](#)

[aboulia](#)

[abound](#)

[about](#)

[about-face](#)

[about-ship](#)

[about-turn](#)

[above](#)

[aboveboard](#)

[above-mentioned](#)

[above-the-line](#)

[above-the-title](#)

[ab ovo](#)

Previous

Next

about



Hear this word spoken

Click the speaker icon of the best audio format for your computer.

[Print View](#)

about [ə bəwt] CORE MEANING: a grammatical word that refers to different sides or aspects of something from some point of orientation • (*prep*) a book about a dog • (*adv*) There's a lot of laziness about.

1. preposition

in connection with: in connection with or relating to • *think about problems*

2. preposition

approximately: close to in number, time, or degree • *inviting about 15 people*

3. preposition

doing or attending to: with or in an activity • *go about your business*

4. preposition

close by: placed, located, or happening close by or around • *frantic activity going on all about us*

5. preposition

around: around or on a place or person • *a red scarf about her neck*

6. adverb preposition

in various places: positioned here and there • *scattered about the house*

Deluxe Sign-In

**Get in shape
by April 16th!**

[Click Here](#)

Highlight section

Reading Center

Read time stories,
activities, and more

Our Partners

The Princeton
Review: pro advice

Studentloan.com:
college loan info

Barnes & Noble: Buy
books

Qwest: low-cost
connectivity

eLibrary: millions of
articles

Fathom: online
learning resource

ClassesUSA.com:
lifelong learning

Capella University:
online degrees

Ancestry.com:
genealogy

Order Encarta



Special Offer!
Order Encarta from
Amazon.com and get
free shipping.

- *scattered about the house*

7. *adverb preposition*

in different directions: from place to place in different directions or in no particular direction • *children running about everywhere*

8. *adverb*

in circulation: available or in circulation

- *there was never much money about*

9. *adverb*

into a reversed position: in or to the opposite direction • *the wrong way about*

10. *adverb*

all around: on every side of or all the way around "He proceeded to the banks of the Hudson, and looked about among the vessels." Jules Verne *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873)

11. *adverb*

used as **intensifier**: used to emphasize a statement, usually when expressing impatience or anger (*informal*) • *Well, it's about time you showed up!*

12. *adverb*

NAUTICAL to opposite tack: on or to the opposite tack

[Old English *onbūtan* "on or around the outside of," from *on* (see on) + *būtan* (see but)]

be about to be on the point of doing something • *The game was about to start.*

be what something or somebody is (all) about to be what something or somebody involves or has as a purpose (*informal*)

not about to used to emphasize that somebody is certainly not going to do something (*informal*) • *I'm not about to apologize!*

free shipping,
now through
April 21, 2002.

[Order Now!](#)

amazon.com

Also On Encarta®

[Know it all? 38 fun
quizzes](#)

[Take computer
classes online](#)

[Raise kids who read](#)

Encarta® World English Dictionary (North American Edition)
© & (P) 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

See a pronunciation key

[See a pronunciation key](#)

[See a printable version of this article](#)

[Search for "about" in Encarta Encyclopedia](#)

[Search for "about" in Electric Library](#)

[Encarta Home](#) | [Reference](#) | [Homework](#) | [College](#) | [Grad](#) | [eLearning](#) | [Parents](#) | [Shop](#) | [Help](#)

[Site Map](#) | [About Encarta](#) | [Encarta Products](#)



More Useful Everyday

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Search](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#)

©2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) [Advertise](#) [TRUSTe Approved](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#)



- Home ► Help
- Word of the Day
- Word Games
- Word for the Wise
- Books and CDs
- Company Info
- Customer Service
- Network Options
- Language Zone
- The Lighter Side
- Site Map

Shopping



Encyclopedia
Britannica 2002 Print
Set Suite
Price: USD \$1295
Available via installment
plan at 0% interest!



Encyclopedia
Britannica 2002 Deluxe
Edition CD-ROM (WIN)
Price: USD \$44.95 After
Rebate



Save 20% on the 2001



un-abridged *ˌʌn-ə-ˈbrɪdʃ*
adj : being the most complete
in its class

The dictionary
is just the
beginning

Pa
Introduc
to Word

Merriam-Webster's COLLEGIATE® DICTIONARY



Collegiate® Dictionary Collegiate® Thesaurus Unabridged

3 entries found for **about**.

To select an entry, click on it. (Click 'Go' if nothing happens.)

about(1,adverb)
about(2,preposition)
about(3,adjective)



Main Entry: **1** **about** ④

Pronunciation: ˈə-ˈbaʊt

Function: *adverb*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *abutan*, from ¹a- + butan outside -- more at **BUT**

Date: before 12th century

1 a : reasonably close to <*about* a year ago> **b :** **ALMOST** <*about* starved> **c :** on the verge of -- usually used with *be* and a following infinitive <*is about* to join the army> -- used with a negative to express intention or determination <*not about* to quit>

2 : on all sides : **AROUND**

3 a : in rotation **b :** around the outside

4 : **HERE AND THERE**

5 : in the vicinity : **NEAR**

6 : in succession : **ALTERNATELY** <*turn about* is fair play>

7 : in the opposite direction <*face about*> <*the other way about*>

Get the **Top 10 Most Popular Sites** for "about"

Get the **Word of the Day** e-mailed every morning. It's free! Click here.

- **Search the Unabridged Dictionary on-line**
and enjoy enhanced versions of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary and Thesaurus at Merriam-Webster Unabridged.

- **Listen to Word for the Wise radio programs**
Listen to broadcasts or read transcripts of previous Word for the Wise programs on public radio.

The dic
bas
Find o
Merri
Un



Save 20% on the 2001
Year in Review!
Price: USD \$19.95

Visit Britannica Store

Pronunciation Symbols

\ə\ as a and u in about	ˌeɪ as e in bet	ˈoʊ as aw in law
ˈkɪ as e in kitten	ˈiː as ea in easy	ˈɔɪ as oy in boy
\ər\ as ur/er in further	ˈɡo as g in go	ˈθɪ as th in thin
\ə as a in ash	ˈhɪ as i in hit	ˈθɪ as th in the
\eɪ as a in ace	ˈaɪ as i in ice	ˈfʊ as oo in foot
\ə as o in mop	ˈj as j in job	ˈfʊ as oo in foot
\aʊ as ou in out	ˈŋɡ as ng in sing	ˈy as y in yet
\tʃ as ch in chin	ˈo as o in go	ˈvɪ as si in vision

For more information see the [Guide To Pronunciation](#).

[Home](#)

[Link to Us](#)

[Advertising Info](#)

[Company Info](#)

[Contact Us](#)

© 2002 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated
[Merriam-Webster Privacy Policy](#)